CHURCH HISTORY

Chapter 39 – The Reformed Churches Survive Persecution

1. *The Huguenots Prosper*
    a. *Huguenots were found among all classes of society: nobles, gentry, craftsmen. professional men, and farmers. But the bulk of them belonged to the middle class. They were the leaders in business, banking, manufacturing, and the professions. In many communities in which the Huguenots were only a small minority they yet were the most influential element. "Rich as a Huguenot'' became a common saying*
2. *Louis XIV Persecutes the Huguenots*
    a. *As a despotic ruler Louis XIV hated Protestantism, particularly Calvinism. He realized that Calvinism is the strongest bulwark of religious and political liberty.*
    b. *In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes. Persecution was renewed. Thousands of members of the French Reformed Church suffered martyrdom. Hundreds renounced their faith. Between five and eight hundred thousand Huguenots fled to Germany, the Netherlands, England, and America. The loss of their skills and industry was a serious blow to France.*
3. *Antoine Court and Paul Rabaut*
    a. *After the death of King Louis XIV in 1715 there was a letup in persecution, but in 1724 it broke out again with new vigor. The man who did much to bring about better conditions was Antoine Court. He is known as "the Restorer of the Reformed Church in France."*
    b. *Lausanne seminary became known as "a school of death." Most of the men trained there for the ministry of the French Reformed Church sooner or later lost their lives as victims of persecution*
    c. *Court once defined the spirit of the "Desert" as "a spirit of mortification, a spirit of reflection, of great wisdom, and especially of martyrdom, which, as it teaches us to die daily to ourselves, to conquer and overcome our passions with their lusts, prepares and disposes us to lose our life courageously amid tortures and on the gallows, if Providence calls us thereto." Paul Rabaut was the embodiment of that spirit.*
4. *The Church Survives the French Revolution*
    a. *Anne Robert Turgot, one of the influential thinkers of the day, induced the young king Louis XVI, who came to the throne in 1774, to decide against persecuting Protestants*
    b. *This was accomplished with the Edict of Toleration in 1787 through Lafayette*
    c. *But in 1793 the atheists secured control of the government. They hated all religion and persecuted Catholics and Protestants alike. So complete was the horror of the period from 1793 to 1794 that it is called the Reign of Terror*
    d. *Napoleon, who at this time became master of France, granted the Reformed and Lutherans equality before the law with the Catholics.*
5. *The Reformed Church in Germany*
    a. *The province of the Palatinate on the upper Rhine probably contained the largest number of Reformed people in Germany; The University of Heidelberg, once a nursing mother of Calvinism, by the beginning of the nineteenth century had become one of the chief centers of Rationalism in that country*
6. *The Presbyterian Church in Scotland*
    a. *During the reign of William and Mary the Presbyterian Church became the State Church of Scotland. Under their successor, Queen Anne, Parliament passed a law which was to cause endless difficulty. It was the act restoring the principle of lay-patronage, which gave to the king and lords the right to appoint ministers of their own choosing to the pulpits of Scotland whenever they became vacant.*
    b. *In 1900 the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church joined to form the United Free Church of Scotland*
7. *The Reformed Church in Switzerland*
    a. *The Reformed Churches in Switzerland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Scotland also fell prey to Modernism and unbelief*
8. *The Reformed Church in Hungary*
    a. *Calvinism was enthusiastically received in Hungary already in Calvin's time. In 1567 the Hungarian Reformed Church adopted the Confession Helvetique*
9. *The Reformed Church in the Netherlands*
    a. *But God's great instrument for bringing about a very remarkable revival of historic Calvinism in the Netherlands was Abraham Kuyper*
10. *Abraham Kuyper is Converted*
    a. *University-educated, he was a modernist even as he became a minister; some of the members of the church were adherent to the historical Calvinism – that he later became convinced to be one of the champions of the doctrine against modernism*
11. *Kuyper Gives Strong Leadership*
    a. *Kuyper possessed in a very high degree the marvelous gift of expressing deep thoughts in a clear, simple, and interesting way. He was a great scholar of enormous learning, a keen and profound thinker, and a superlative stylist*
12. *Kuyper's Method of Reform*
    a. *Kuyper's work was also a reaction against the conditions of the times, but to make that reaction effective he employed an entirely different method. In the first place, he returned to historic Protestantism. He battled against ancient and more recent heresies. And while none of the groups that had departed from historic Protestantism did much or anything to stem the rising tide of Modernism, Kuyper opposed it with all his might*
    b. *In the second place, he fought persistently against the bad conditions in the Church by laboring to reform the Church itself; and – this is the important thing – in doing so he employed churchly methods*
    c. *In the third place, he devoted himself untiringly to arousing the Church from its deadness; he spurred the members on to an activity far surpassing Methodist zeal*